A. Policy

Lakewood Police Department employees are routinely exposed to situations and people hazardous to their health; including exposure to lice, rabid animals, serum B hepatitis, and AIDS.

Prudent precaution and education on infectious diseases and health hazards can significantly minimize the health hazard to employees. Employees shall demonstrate an increased awareness and understanding of how infectious diseases are transmitted to reduce their risk when exposed. It shall be important to remember that carriers of infectious disease are not readily identifiable and may withhold information about their medical condition. Care shall be exercised when exposed to a citizen who is bleeding, vomiting, or excreting any other type of bodily fluid.

B. Procedure

1. Infectious disease precautions
   a. Common sense and caution shall be used by employees in limiting their exposure to infectious diseases.
   b. Direct contact with blood and other bodily fluids shall be avoided whenever possible. Employees shall carry issued protective disposable gloves while on their tours of duty.
   c. Employees shall not eat, drink, or smoke at crime scenes where bodily fluids are present or other contagious factors exist.
   d. Employees shall be aware that certain prescribed medications, i.e., steroids and asthma medications, suppress their immune system and make them more susceptible to infectious disease.

      If employees are taking prescription drugs, they should consult with their private physician to determine if these drugs suppress their immune system.

   e. Pregnant employees shall be advised to report to their physician any direct contacts with bodily fluids during their tour of duty. Infectious diseases may cause severe problems in newborns.

2. Infectious disease training

   The Patrol Support Coordinator shall be the infectious disease control coordinator. The Coordinator shall be responsible for disseminating updated information and coordinating roll call or in-service training regarding infectious diseases.

3. Supplies
a. Division commanders shall ensure that adequate supplies are available for infectious disease control within their divisions.

b. Protective disposable gloves, other first-aid supplies, and disinfecting materials shall be made readily available at all times in the patrol area.

c. Supplies in the patrol area shall include:

   (1) Fluid Impervious Gowns
   (2) Disposable gloves
   (3) Red biohazard plastic bags and ties
   (4) Dual guard mask with visor
   (5) Spray bottles
   (6) Liquid and aerosol germicidal cleaner
   (7) Disposable antimicrobial towelettes.
   (8) Absorbent kits.
   (9) "Isolation Area - Do Not Enter" signs.

d. Supplies to employees shall include.

   (1) Protective disposable gloves
   (2) Disposable antimicrobial towelettes
   (3) Airways

4. Custody procedures

   a. Subjects with blood or other bodily fluids present on their person shall be transported separately from other subjects. In extreme situations where the police have reason to believe the subject has AIDS and is bleeding or vomiting, the prisoner transport van shall be utilized. If transportation to a health-care facility is necessary, an ambulance shall be summoned.

   b. Information concerning an arrestee's or other person's affliction with AIDS or the HIV virus shall be revealed only to those persons outside the Police Department who are actually at risk of contacting the disease from a known AIDS carrier or those persons assuming responsibility for custody of the arrestee. Examples of appropriate disclosure include:
(1) Informing medical personnel who are responsible for the patient's care.

(2) Informing firemen, district attorney investigators, or personnel from the coroner's office at an incident scene who are at risk of exposure to blood.

(3) Informing other support personnel such as fire fighters, paramedics, sheriffs, or detox personnel whenever custody of a subject is transferred.

This shall be true even if the AIDS carrier voluntarily tells the police of his medical condition. When the confidential medical information is being discussed, police personnel shall exercise care so as to avoid being overheard by members of the public. Discussions on the radio shall not reveal such information.

c. Persons who are taken into custody and are suspected or known AIDS carriers and have blood or bodily fluids on their person shall be placed in a holding cell if they are brought to the Police Department. An “Isolation Area - Do Not Enter” sign shall be posted at the entrances to the holding areas. Employees shall wear protective gloves any time they take a person into custody who has blood or other bodily fluids on his person. Police personnel are cautioned to exercise care so as to avoid discussing confidential medical information in the presence of other arrestees who may be in the prisoner holding area.

d. Employees shall indicate on custody forms when a subject taken into custody makes a voluntary statement that he has an infectious disease. Verbatim narratives shall also be included when preparing offense reports. A notation shall also be made when a subject has blood or bodily fluids present on his person or clothing, i.e., “bodily fluids present.”

e. Employees who have actual skin contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of a subject shall, as a preventive and health measure, complete a Worker's Compensation Form (first report of injury form) prior to going off duty.

5. Decontamination

a. Decontamination procedures shall be effected after a vehicle's interior, personal equipment, or a holding cell has been exposed to blood or bodily fluid discharges from a known or suspected carrier of the AIDS virus.

b. A supervisor shall, as soon as possible, notify the Patrol Support Coordinator who shall affect the decontamination procedures in cooperation with the Emergency Manager.
c. The Emergency Manager shall arrange for an approved specialized private firm to complete the decontamination as soon as practical.

d. Contaminated vehicles shall be taken or towed to the shops and be posted with an "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign.

e. Contaminated holding cells shall be posted immediately with an "Infectious Disease Contamination" sign.

f. If exigent or unusual circumstances occur requiring immediate decontamination, the recommended decontamination procedures shall be as follows:

(1) Vehicles

(a) Protective disposable gloves shall be worn during all phases of decontamination.

Note: an employee shall be aware that rings, jewelry of any kind, or fingernails may compromise the structural integrity of the disposable gloves. An employee shall make certain that the gloves are not torn before attempting to begin any phase of the decontamination process.

(b) Any excess blood or bodily fluids shall first be wiped up utilizing an absorbent kit or other approved absorbent material. Afterward, the absorbent material shall immediately be put into a red biohazard plastic bag and placed in the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle."

(c) The Environmental Manager shall destroy the disposable cleaning materials in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations.

(2) Holding cells

(a) Protective disposable gloves shall be worn during all phases of decontamination.

(b) An employee shall make certain that the gloves are not torn before attempting to begin any phase of the decontamination process.

(c) Any excess blood or bodily fluids shall first be wiped up utilizing an absorbent kit or other approved absorbent material. Then the absorbent material shall immediately be put into a heavy-duty plastic bag and placed in the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle."
(d) The contaminated area shall be sprayed with a virucidal-germicidal solution and allowed to air-dry for 10 minutes.

(e) All disposable contaminated cleaning items shall be put in heavy-duty plastic bags and placed into the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle."

(f) The Emergency Response Coordinator shall destroy the disposable cleaning material in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations.

6. Handling and storage of evidence

a. Criminalistics and Property Control Unit personnel shall adhere to a precise regimen when handling, processing, and storing potentially infectious disease-contaminated evidence or property.

b. All items of evidence or property having bodily fluids on them shall be treated as if they are contaminated.

c. All items of evidence or property having bodily fluids on them and sacks containing these items shall be handled with protective disposable gloves.

d. Property Control Unit personnel shall furnish protective disposable gloves to all personnel or others handling evidence or property with bodily fluids on them, while in the Property Control Unit.

e. All evidence or property having bodily fluids on it shall be placed in paper evidence bags.

f. Wet clothing shall be booked according to existing policy and procedures with the assistance of a Criminalistics Unit technician.

g. All evidence or property for disposal shall be placed into the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle" provided.

7. Contaminated department or personal property.

a. When department-issued or personal property is contaminated by bodily fluids in the line of duty, personnel shall place the items in a sealed plastic bag.

b. If an employee or supervisor determines that effective disinfection procedures are not practical for the contaminated items, they shall be placed into the designated "Contaminated Item Receptacle" for disposal. A memorandum shall then be directed through the chain of command for equipment replacement.
c. The correspondence shall include:

(1) The circumstances by which the property became contaminated.

(2) The name of the employee or supervisor who confirmed that disinfecting procedures were not practical.

(3) Whether any person was charged with destruction of public or private property due to the circumstances by which it became contaminated.

8. Line-of-Duty Exposure

a. For the purposes of this policy, "exposure" shall be defined as contact of blood or body fluids with a part of a person's anatomy permitting entry of a microorganism into the body.

b. Whenever personnel have cause to believe they have had a high-risk exposure during line-of-duty activity, a supervisor shall be contacted and the First Report of Injury Forms shall be completed detailing the extent of the exposure. Examples of high-risk exposure are:

(1) Handled items that have bodily fluids on them and noticeable scratches, cuts, or open sores are present at the area of contact.

(2) Direct contact with bodily fluids from a subject on an area where you have an open sore or cut.

(3) Given direct mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (CPR).

(4) Received a cut or puncture wound, as a direct result of searching or arresting a subject--usually this would result from encountering a hypodermic needle.

c. In addition, a Supervisor's Review of the Accident/Exposure Form shall be completed by a supervisor and forwarded via the chain of command to Risk Management, Department of Employee Relations.

d. The employee who was exposed shall be evaluated clinically and serologically as soon as possible for evidence of infection. If medical personnel determine that a potential exposure of an employee has occurred, the "Colorado Public Safety Worker's Form for Reporting Exposure to blood or Other Potentially Infectious Body Fluids" shall be completed. This form shall be sent through the Patrol Support Coordinator to the Colorado Department of Health. A supervisor shall make an immediate report to the health department by telephone of the potential exposure.
Medical information provided by state and local health departments to employees or supervisors including laboratory test results on the involved persons shall be strictly confidential.

C. Rule

1. Employees shall treat information concerning whether suspects or victims are AIDS carriers as strictly confidential.